

Town of Acton SIDEWALK COMMITTEE

July 11, 2012
Acton Memorial Library
7:00 pm.

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MEETING Minutes

Attendees: Bettina Abe, Leslie Hogan, Sytske Campbell, Pam Cochrane, Dick Calandrella, Steve Evans.

Citizen's Concerns

Bill Marathias re pedestrian safety on Taylor and Minot roads. Working toward this since 2008. We updated him on work in progress such as pedestrian safety survey, and sidewalk design and progress. ► Bettina will setup a meeting with Engineering and Bill specifically regarding access points to the planned walkway within the Arboretum, from Taylor Road. ► Leslie will email plans to Bill.

June Minutes

Approved.

Update Engineering (Leslie)

A June 28 Email from Corey/Eng updated us:

Great Road Crosswalk (Comprehensive Permit)

- The crosswalk at that location is under review by the applicant for the comprehensive permit at 263 Great Road. We've asked the applicant to design, permit and install the crosswalk as part of their project. I'll know more when the project engineer submits their revised plans to the Board of Appeals. The applicant will need a permit from the State in order to construct a crosswalk on Great Road.

Pending Sidewalk Construction

- Summer Street (up to Ethan Allen Drive) – awaiting the tree removal by NStar.
- Martin Street – paving has been delayed due to weather, but Martin Street is one of the next couple projects on the crew's list.

From Engineering we also received copies of letters to abutters on High Street and Taylor Road, where there are sidewalk project designs in progress.

Safe Routes to School

Heather Ross from Safe Routes to School presented to us introductory and educational material about the program. % of kids who walk or bike to school has decreased dramatically, while % who get a ride from parents has increased dramatically. Why? Distance, safety; Schools are built larger and on fringe properties of towns, vs. neighborhoods.

A Federal program, distributes \$612 M to states. Currently Douglas school is a partner/participant.

Elements of Program:

- Education; train the trainer. 2nd grade pedestrian safety, 4th – 8th grade bike safety.
- Encouragement: walk to school days, walking clubs, Walking/Wheeling Wednesdays, giveaways, etc. Walking School Bus.
- Enforcement: collaborate with Police.
- Evaluation: student survey how they get to school fall and spring. Is the program making a difference?
- Engineering: after a year of a school's participation, it is eligible for an infrastructure assessment by a MassDOT engineer. 70% of the program funding goes to resulting improvement projects.

Benefits: increase student physical activity, create community, improve congestion and air quality.

When it's safe, encourage kids to walk and bike. When not safe, make it safe!

More Information: Heather Ross. MassRides. 617-892-6095.

www.commute.com www.saferoutesinfo.org Heather.Ross@dot.state.ma.us

We requested the PowerPoint presentation by email.

Pricilla Kotyck, vice principal at Conant School is very interested, but was not able to attend. Bill Marathias showed a few slides regarding Taylor Street. Bill will try to engage the Conant school administration in the Safe Routes to School program.

PSA announcement?

Through Acton TV. One message: pedestrian safety and walking with or against traffic. ► Bettina and Leslie will target beginning work on it in September.

Sidewalk Funds discussion, continued

Input from Engineering Corey York, regarding a Dedicated Sidewalk Fund:

"The Budget that includes sidewalk repairs and improvements is spent each year on infrastructure improvements and there is usually a minimal balance at the end of the fiscal year. "

Kate Chung (co-chair) exchanged email with Town Manager Steve LeDoux, who said:
"We're currently using gift monies to fund sidewalk expansion.

In terms of "rolling unused monies over from one year to the next", I think the creation of a Stabilization Fund and subsequent transferring of monies from the current year Operating budget (via Town Meeting vote) is difficult to set up, maintain, and fund.

It also doesn't protect the "bottom-line budget" as a management problem solving technique which has helped the Town maintain a AAA bond rating. Our management team loses with this proposal in my view.

Why not sponsor a warrant article for annual appropriation for "sidewalk construction" at each future Town Meeting?"

(A warrant article: money for the purpose of specific sidewalks construction, which will be retained past the end of fiscal years instead of reverting to free cash.)
Some discussion of pros and cons ensued.

Motion made and seconded and passed:

"Sidewalk Committee recommends that a warrant article be prepared for town meeting to allocate funds for the construction of sidewalks; list of sidewalks to be developed in cooperation with the engineering department." 4 in favor, 1 abstention, 1 objection.
Passed.

Text for Sidewalk Comments to the Planning Board if the Sidewalk does not feel a Sidewalk is necessary in a new development. Rewording was in progress when we had to abruptly adjourn due to the 9pm closing of our meeting space (library).

Voting tabled until next meeting. Work in progress:

"The Sidewalk Committee doesn't recommend a sidewalk for this development, but there is a demand for sidewalks in town. In lieu of building a sidewalk for this development, we would request a contribution be made to the sidewalk fund using the established formula."

Meeting adjourned 8:58 p.m.
Respectfully, Steve Evans

Open Meeting law requires that the following must be included in the minutes:

- ✓ Date, place, time and matters discussed.
- ✓ Summaries of discussions
- ✓ List of documents used
- ✓ Decisions made
- ✓ Actions taken
- ✓ Record of all votes (yeas, nays and abstentions).
- ✓ A list of all documents and other exhibits, such as photographs, recordings, maps and presentations used by the body at the open or executive session.

Future Meetings Planned: (All at 7pm at the Acton Memorial Library Conference Room, on the second Wednesday of the month)

2012: **Aug 8** Sep 12 Oct 10 Nov 14 Dec 12